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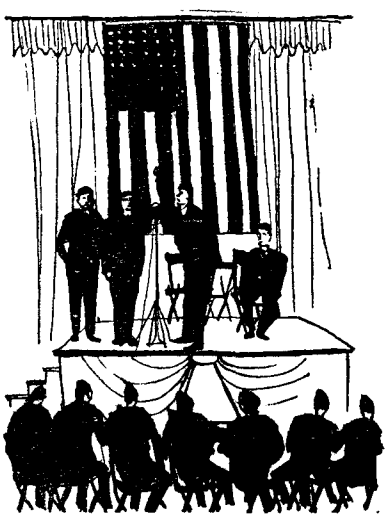
The Game of Revolution

—Dan Kurzman

THE Commonweal



MYSTIQUE OF THE RIGHT

by William V. Shannon

Dual Heritage of Julien Green

by Mrs. George Norman

olume LXI, No. 2 October 15, 1954 Twenty Cents

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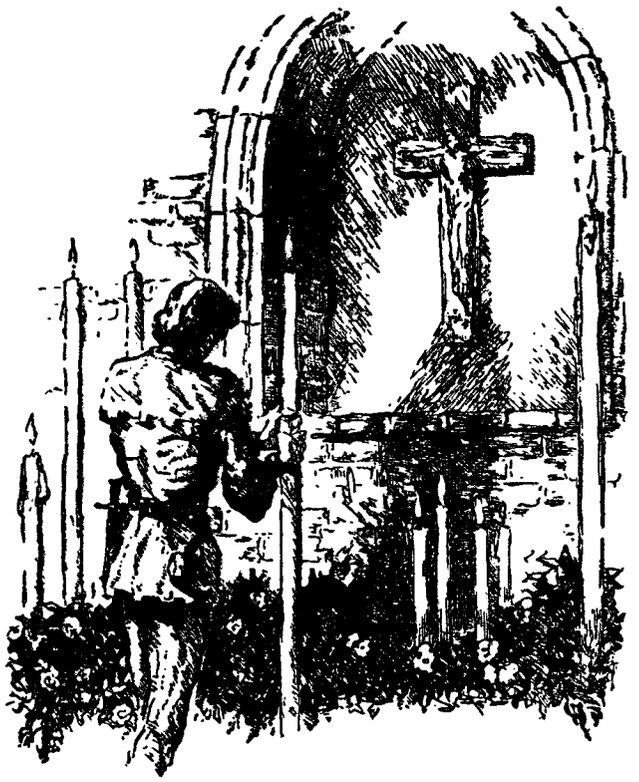

"Measuring Up" to a Saint

In France and England during the Middle Ages it was the custom of wealthy parishioners to donate candles tall as themselves for use on shrine altars.

This practice gave rise to the expression of "measuring up" to a saint.

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PURVEYORS TO THE VATICAN BY APPOINTMENT

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THE

Commonweal

week by week

MR. BUDENZ' CRUSADE

IN his weekly column syndicated in a number of Catholic papers, Mr. Louis Budenz recently criticized The Commonweal for its editorial, "The Illusion of Omnipotence" (Sept 10). Mr. Budenz finds our position "most amazing" for a journal which is edited by Catholic laymen. He says that this magazine "wants to know what are 'the alternatives' to the acceptance of 'peaceful coexistence'" as *"the major premise in American policy"* [italics added], and assures us that "common sense advises us that there are many and they must be taken immediately."

Mr. Budenz is laboring under some kind of misapprehension. No one, obviously, except Party members and their small band of fellow-travelers, would advocate such a premise today. Such a naive approach is simply not an issue in any serious discussion of our foreign affairs.

What we were discussing was a *complete* ruling out of all prospect of eventual peaceful settlement. We questioned this position, asking "what alternative is left to our diplomats" if this be true. We would still like to know, and think Mr. Budenz should have let his readers in on the "many alternatives which he claims "common sense" suggests to him and which, he warns, "should be taken immediately."

THIS magazine has observed before that "peaceful coexistence" is a largely meaningless and usually dangerous phrase.

It is a largely meaningless phrase because it means different things to the Soviet Union and to the West. To the Soviet Union it means avoiding war until such a time as the Kremlin can defeat us through diplomacy or attack us militarily with assurance of success. To most men in the West it means, simply, the alternative to co-nonexistence.

It is a dangerous phrase because some may see it as an immediate policy (or a "premise" as Mr. Budenz has it) rather than as an ultimate *goal*, and this mistake could indeed lead us to appeasement and disaster. Fortunately, no significant segment of American opinion today makes this error. The error to which many Americans now seem inclined lies in the opposite direction: to accept global conflict with the Soviet Union as our fated goal and to advocate policies which would hasten its seeming inevitability.

We would like to say this: all prospect of peaceful settlement may indeed be hopeless. We may be fated to participate in a mutual suicide pact with the Soviet Union. We may be forced to preside over the apocalypse. But those who are convinced of this should have the public courage of their convictions. They should play fair and say specifically what they mean in terms of practical decisions. It is not really difficult to denounce the phrase "peaceful coexistence" for the empty thing it is. What is difficult is to formulate a positive policy which offers the world some hope.

Is all negotiation with the Communist world, all hope of an eventual solution short of war, all diplomacy, an illusion and ensnarement? Are those who express hope for ultimate coexistence (in the sense of avoiding global war) to be charged with "softness" toward Communism? If so, Pope Pius XII must be charged too, for in an address delivered on Sept. 30 he said that, even when modern atomic war is judged by a nation to be "indispensable" for its survival, "even then . . . one must try by every means possible to avoid it through international understandings." "Every means possible" obviously includes negotiation, and "international understandings" certainly means some kind of understanding between Russia and the West. Is this a "naive" trust in some easy settlement? Is this "softness towards Communism?"

Of course not. But it is perhaps fortunate that the Holy Father's position insures him against the attacks of some "militant" American anti-Communists for whom the mere mention of "understanding" suggests a betrayal of our civilization.

The tragic flaw in the crusaders' thinking is their fascination with verbalization: Lenin *said* that

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there could be no coexistence between the Communist and the capitalist worlds—so there can be no coexistence. Stalin wrote that war is inevitable—so war is inevitable.

We refuse to believe that history is so determined. We refuse to accept policies molded to Marxist predictions. The West's chance is that the element of historical change will frustrate such predictions. Its hope is to prove them wrong.

History is not a syllogism. We cannot deduce the future from the pronouncements of the past. At most we can be warned by them and shape strong policies in the light of the warning.

Mr. Budenz would have us trapped within a historical vacuum. He would have us signed, sealed, and delivered over to "history." This way lies despair. We continue to believe that through strength and intelligence the West may hope.

SUBSTITUTE FOR EDC

IT is too early at this writing to know the reaction, country by country, to the remarkably speedy reaching of the London agreement, which would restore German sovereignty and admit West Germany to the Brussels and North Atlantic defense treaties. One key contribution in making the new plan acceptable to the signatories was the willingness of Britain and Canada to commit a total of five divisions to the common defense of the Continent. Another was that Western Germany, at a crucial stage of the negotiations, agreed to accept a severe ban on the production of specified offensive weapons and promised not to resort to force to achieve either reunification or "rectification" of her boundaries.

This time, France might well ratify if she were let alone, for Premier Mendès-France is at the zenith of his prestige and intends to use his influence to secure approval from the French Assembly. Moreover, concessions to French sensibilities were considerable at London. But what steps will the Soviet Union be able to take in the meantime to thwart a favorable vote by the Assembly? Where Germany is concerned, the USSR can confidently be expected to step up its propaganda about reunification—a challenge the Allies are attempting to meet in their statement of general principles. If the cold war prospect is suddenly more hopeful, there are unhappily plenty of possible slips between signing and ratification. And if this plan should be passed up, not only would Germany be sorely tempted to rearm independently and go it alone, but the cause of European union would receive an irreparable setback.

TWO CAMPAIGNS

IT is a truism in economics that bad money drives good currency out of circulation. In politics this law often seems to work in reverse. If one political party puts up an outstanding candidate, the opposition very frequently beats the bushes to come up with a candidate of similar stature.

Such a situation, it seems to us, exists right now in New Jersey. Clifford P. Case, the Republican candidate for Senator, won his national reputation by the caliber of his service in the House of Representatives. In the present political context Mr. Case has a special appeal because he is what has come to be called an Eisenhower Republican—a forward-looking moderate of the Eastern variety of the GOP. He represents the kind of Republicanism that must be encouraged if the GOP is to be a responsible voice of conservatism rather than of sheer head-in-the-sand reaction.

Because Mr. Case is what is called a liberal Republican, he has in recent weeks come under particularly bitter attacks from right-wing extremists inside his own party. How much this internal opposition has hurt his chances will not be known until November, but there is no doubt that the enmity of the Old Guard has cost Mr. Case some

NEXT WEEK

ELISABETH LANGGAESSER, the eminent German novelist, author of *The Quest*, makes a final address to her readers in the Fall Book Number.

"Sweet and bitter both you offered me, whether you wore the habit of a monk or the jacket of a sportsman; you laughed at me, in the guise of a young girl, you laughed and made me blush. If a Professor, you have got on my nerves and made me sick at heart. As a Protestant you have tried my pen and made me aware of many things of which I had no inkling; as a Catholic priest, you have companioned me with your prayers; as an artist or actor you have exchanged ideas with me, in times of crisis you have confided in me. Almost always, however, you have forced me to revise my own opinion of myself, for you have given me, through an awareness perhaps stronger because strained through the sieve of each book and its objectivity, the personal impression that we—you, my reader, and I—are both listening together to what is called 'the spirit of the age,' and that in this secret sharing we are contemporaries."

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campaign contributions, and there is a very real possibility that many right-wing Republicans will stay at home on Election Day rather than vote for Clifford Case. Such conduct may mean defeat for the Republican party, but, as someone has said, in that event the right-wing would at least have the satisfaction of owning the wreckage.

Under such circumstances, losing the election in New Jersey would be a real blow to the entire Eisenhower wing of the Republican party. In order to prevent this, independent voters in New Jersey would normally be very much inclined to support Mr. Case. But this time they come up against the fact that Mr. Case's Democratic opponent, Charles R. Howell, is another candidate with outstanding recommendations. Thus independent voters in New Jersey approach the coming election with a real problem. No matter which way the election goes, one highly qualified man is going to lose.

No such situation exists in Illinois. There the distinguished Senator Paul Douglas is fighting for his political life against Mr. Joseph Meek, a right-wing Republican. Mr. Meek is not nationally known, but over the years he has built up valuable political contacts throughout the state, and present reports are that his chances are very good. As far as his views on national issues are concerned, they seem consistently to have been closer to the Chicago *Tribune* position than to liberal Republicanism.

Senator Douglas' qualifications and accomplishments, on the other hand, are a matter of record. One need not have agreed with him on every issue to note that his service in the Senate has been marked by outstanding integrity and by uncompromising intellectual honesty, free from partisan narrowness. Despite party labels, his views, especially on matters of foreign policy, seem closer to those of President Eisenhower than those of many Republicans, including Senator Douglas' opponent. The independent voter in Illinois this fall does not seem to be confronted with the hard choice that faces New Jersey voters. Senator Douglas clearly deserves to be returned to the Senate.

THINGS TO COME

THAT the new Navy submarine, the *Nautilus*, would be able to circle the globe under water on a volume of uranium fuel equivalent to that of a golf ball is a staggering thought. Atomic productive power, as well as atomic destructiveness, has actually come to be. It all projects a future virtually impossible to delineate at present.

When men are no longer dependent on the vagaries of rainfall for their fields and cattle, since atomic power will enable them to tap and transform the limitless waters of the seas, a new age of plenty should be at hand. This is but one example. Moreover, the general substitution of atomic fuel for coal, hydroelectric power and petroleum products will mean vast changes in methods of production and transportation, patterns of employment and consumption, if not of daily life.

To speculate about the material wonders of the coming atomic-power age may afford a certain pleasure; yet the present stage of its development presents a myriad of questions. What should be the source of the huge sums needed to carry current researches through to realization? Government, private enterprise, or both?

And when atomic power becomes available for general use, will it be distributed at private profit? If so, would rates be rigorously regulated? It would seem that the force of the arguments against the public (private) utility companies is multiplied many times when applied to distributing atomic energy. That is one more reason that the Dixon-Yates award demands still closer scrutiny. In fact the prospect embodied in the *Nautilus* means that henceforth all civilian arrangements involving the AEC should be triple-checked.

THE RABBIT WHICH HERDS SHEEP

WE faithful readers of *Life* were rewarded last week by a story, with pictures, of a rabbit which herds sheep.

It seems that this rabbit (white, conventional Easter-type) used to hang around a bar in San Francisco where customers fed it gin-soaked carrots. This admittedly was an uncommon way of life, but not radically different from that of the bar's biped customers who preferred gin-soaked onions and olives. Then one day a friend of the rabbit decided to take it away from all that. He took the rabbit to a farm. Now on this farm he had some sheep, kept to mow the lawn. When rabbit and sheep met, there was instant hostility. One old ewe charged the rabbit. The rabbit, pluckier than teetotaling rabbits, charged the ewe. The rabbit landed on the ewe's head and beat upon the sheep's forehead with its rear legs. The browbeaten ewe turned and ran.

The ewe, so to speak, had been cowed by the rabbit. She still nourishes resentment, but the rabbit has established a moral ascendancy over the ewe and its flock. It herds the flock, nipping the sheeps' heels, keeping them at work on the lawn. Pictures of all this are in *Life*.

The editors of this magazine are not unduly

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surprised by this. We have always had considerable respect for rabbits. One editor as a child had a rabbit in the city of Chicago, and it grew up tough, prowling the streets, fighting cats. Another editor at about the age of six shoved a finger into a neighbor's rabbit hutch and had the finger bit nearly off. It was never clear whether the rabbit in his myopia had made an honest mistake and thought the finger a carrot, or whether it was dissatisfied and sought the greater prestige of a carnivorous reputation, or whether it simply had had enough of nosey children. In any event, that editor has since kept a decent distance from rabbits.

To get back to sheepherding rabbits. The discovery that rabbits possess this talent strikes us as being of considerable import to the nation of Australia, where they are said to have plenty of both sheep and rabbits, the latter up to now without gainful employment. At the price of carrots and a bit of gin, Australia might be able to solve both the labor and the rabbit problems. Australia can have this scheme from us for nothing if it wants it.

NUCLEAR WAR III

WINSTON Churchill credits United States possession of the atomic bomb with having prevented a Soviet conquest of Europe. From the end of the war, the bomb was there, a brooding presence in the hardening East-West struggle.

There was a race to stay ahead in atomic development. The Soviets got the A-bomb; we got the H-bomb; the Soviets got the H-bomb. And when that happened, we realized that the race was becoming terrifyingly meaningless. As was described in this space last week, the numbers and size of nuclear bombs became largely irrelevant, for both sides had reached the point where each could totally destroy the other.

This chilling realization provoked what might be called the atomic crisis of 1954, the rather desperate and occasionally hysterical search for what to do next.

In the April 1954 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles outlined a new policy for using nuclear weapons as a cold war deterrent which, as interpreted, misinterpreted, merchandised, attacked and exploited, served to scare the Western alliance half to death.

The policy was called "massive retaliation." And here is what Mr. Dulles said: "The heart of the problem is how to deter attack. This, we believe, requires that a potential aggressor be left in no doubt that he would be certain to suffer damage outweighing any possible gains from aggression . . . . [the free world] must not put itself in a position where the only response open to it is general war . . . . the main reliance must be on the power of the free community to retaliate with great force by mobile means at places of its own choice . . . . [this] does not mean that if there is a Communist attack somewhere in Asia, atom or hydrogen bombs will necessarily be dropped on the great industrial centers of China or Russia."

These are isolated sentences selected from the text, but they give what seems to us the crux of the argument. The chief point is that the West would choose its own means to stop aggression.

This much is both an enlargement and an improvement of what we did in Korea. There we set deliberate limits to the war and made them stick. It was an uneasy business because we too were afraid of what the Chinese might do (bomb Japan, or use submarines against the UN fleet) if we exceeded the limits; and the limits which had been set gave us naval and air advantages but put us under a considerable disadvantage on the ground, where we could least afford it. Nonetheless, it was a significant development in a world where the inevitable totality of war had become something of a cliché.

But Administration spokesmen made the Dulles policy into a political slogan: "No more Koreas." There would be no more small wars; the implication drawn by the Western public was that there consequently would be just one more big war. The subsequent speeches of Mr. Dulles and especially of Mr. Nixon, and the reduction of conventional military forces supported this interpretation.

As the plan was generally understood by the public, it was subject to heavy criticism: it was inflexible, promising an unthinkable total war in return for small aggression; and because the retaliation was unthinkable, it actually invited small aggression. As the Western failure in Geneva proved, such a scheme was hollow; there were profound moral objections to the massive employment of atomic weapons in a circumstance which only indirectly could be understood as self-defense; and the plan, as generally understood, split the West.

As is clear from the texts cited, Mr. Dulles specifically disavowed the plan of automatically retaliating against small wars with an atomic attack on Communist cities. The implication might well be drawn that he intended to lay the groundwork for the employment of tactical nuclear weapons, as Admiral Radford wished to do at Dienbienphu. But the scheme went up in the smoke of international controversy.

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Mystique of the Right

THE CORE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MYTH IS THE BELIEF IN THE POSSIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF STABILITY.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

PEGUY has written that all things begin in mystique and end in politics. If this be true, we may gain some insight into the politics of the Eisenhower Administration by an examination of the conservative mystique animating it, and the choice of issues, the rhetoric, the political style and the personalities in which that mystique has found expression.

Two years ago President Eisenhower led to victory a Republican party out of power for twenty years. Those two decades of defeat for the Republican party were years of revolutionary change for the American people. The triumph of the GOP in 1952 was a success achieved over formidable obstacles. As others have observed, the Democrats in 1952 were, in one sense, the party of the *status quo*. Since they were appealing to laboring men, farmers, Negroes, and lower middle class people whose lot had improved markedly during the preceding two decades, it was natural they should have had as their campaign song, "Don't Let Them Take It Away." The millions of voters to whom this appeal was directed had responded favorably in five preceding elections and in 1952 they undoubtedly still constituted a majority. To this majority, moreover, the Republicans represented change of an undefined and possibly radical character. They were allegedly on a crusade, but its ends were unknown even to themselves. Its only precise objectives were honesty in government and peace in Korea. Since, as Adlai Stevenson wryly observed, there was no pro-corruption or pro-unlimited war ticket in the field, even these goals were non-controversial.

The election was thus not a verdict on clearly-drawn issues and programs but rather a triumph for an old yet once again potent conservative mythology invigorated by an upsurge of moral indignation and personalized in a candidate of uncommonly mythic dimensions. This fall's elections are an oblique retesting of the effectiveness of that mythology.

Myths are hard to campaign against. They more usually die from decay within rather than from assaults from without. That is why most Democratic candidates this fall are campaigning against some ominous "they" and some vague entity called "the Administration" rather than attributing responsibility to Dwight Eisenhower, where it belongs. Iconoclasm is a political risk they do not care to venture.

It is not that they fear Mr. Eisenhower is personally popular in an authentic political sense. He inspires little of the personal adulation (or hatred) which past political figures such as Teddy Roosevelt, Al Smith, or Franklin Roosevelt aroused. His strength is not that of an aggressive leader of his party in combat but rather of a static symbol, somewhat remote, whose personality lends prestige and dignity to his party's cause. He is for that reason the more inaccessible to attack.

Mr. Eisenhower's position is not dissimilar from that of the last Republican president, Herbert Hoover. Hoover, like President Eisenhower a technician rather than a politician, was the last successful incarnation of the conservative mythology. His talents as a successful businessman, engineer, and efficiency expert perfectly symbolized what was known as "the New Era" of permanent prosperity allegedly made possible by the genius and efficiency of the businessman and the engineer. No partisan criticism could have breached that myth. "Black Tuesday" demolished it for a generation. Today the routine Democratic politician is hopeful that history may repeat itself.

THE core of the conservative myth is the belief in the possibility and desirability of stability. This is the natural fixation of a party drawing its vital strength from the middle and upper income groups and founded on the interests of the business community. Those who are already prosperous may benefit handsomely from wars and inflation as many in this country have during the last fifteen years, but their natural instinct is to preserve the *status quo* from which they already benefit. That is why the stock market usually breaks sharply with the onset of war or the rumor of war even though, in the past, wars have always meant prosperity.

Mr. Shannon is Washington correspondent of the New York Post.

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Similarly, the business community, devoted to steady profit making, desires regular income and predictable growth and fears the dislocations of sudden change. A drift away from competition and toward monopoly, price-fixing and stability, as Joseph Schumpeter and other economists have observed, is the inherent tendency of mature capitalist economy.

Granted this insistent yearning for stability, the self-consistent character of the Eisenhower campaign becomes clear. Mr. Eisenhower, after his rapid transition from soldier to civilian candidate, emerged quite predictably as a champion of the "honest dollar." On his whistlestop tours he demonstrated this slogan by using a piece of wood to represent the 1939 dollar and breaking it in half to represent the 1952 dollar. This homely demonstration made a strong impression on millions of voters concerned by the impact of rapid changes on their savings and investments, but the argument was fallacious. Wars are inevitably financed by easy credit and a vast expansion in the money supply to pay for non-productive military goods. Price levels and money values, once inflated, never return to their pre-war levels. Even the attempt at a partial return is painful, as Treasury Secretary Humphrey discovered when he raised the interest rate three-quarters of one per cent last year, and the Administration is now back to an easy credit policy, with money as "cheap" as it was under the Truman administration. The appeal for the "honest dollar" is important here, however, not for its practical significance but for its symbolic content. Candidate Eisenhower's piece of wood was a tangible manifestation of the major myth of the right: the search for stability.

It may be noted that the Democrats spoke not of stable money but of an expanding economy. This was the natural appeal for a liberal coalition of essentially have-not groups to make. The Democrats can never represent the *status quo* in any fundamental sense. They must offer change, or at least the promise of change, because most of the people they represent are those who hope that tomorrow may be better than today. The liberal politician rides the tide of the revolution of rising expectations.

OUR Puritan heritage is one of the great assets of conservatism. Mr. Hoover immortalized the meaning of that heritage in the phrase "rugged individualism." He might more accurately have said that individualism is only for the rugged. Most people cannot afford it. Most people, that is, are not able to stand entirely alone and survive ruggedly whatever the economic fates may deal them.

The conservatives have grudgingly learned to accommodate themselves to such devices for the common welfare as labor unions, old age pensions, and unemployment insurance, but it is doubtful if they really accept them. Their opposition is founded not simply on the fact that social welfare laws cost money or are occasionally burdensome to business in a minor way. Conservatives in England and Germany not only accepted such laws decades ago but often pioneered them as a calculated strategy to outwit socialists. In this country, however, Theodore Roosevelt has been the only twentieth century conservative to adopt the Bismarckian view. To most conservatives, these social programs have been profoundly disturbing, for they are deeply alien to the Puritan spirit of self-reliance and individualism.

Logically, it seems strange that conservatives who survived without loss the passing of the sweatshop and the twelve-hour day should continue to resist each succeeding reform as if it represented some grave disaster. But it is not logic but myth which controls. The metaphor "creeping socialism" is revealing. It is always the portent, not the present, which confounds them. Mr. Eisenhower accurately expressed their misapprehension of reality when he said that if people wanted total security, they could find it in jail.

This conservative dogma, however, notwithstanding its dour side, has a subtly ingratiating appeal. The Democratic slogan of "Don't Let Them Take It Away" boomeranged. It suggested that the widespread prosperity was a gift from the government. Many voters preferred to believe that no one could take it away because they had earned it themselves and it was theirs by right and not as the incidental beneficiaries of war and inflation. Rugged individualism is a slogan more congenial to this self-confident mood if not to the realities of our situation.

It would at first glance appear paradoxical that a party committed to peace and stability should select a military man as as its spokesman. This is less paradoxical than it seems, for tranquility suggests order, and a general, the end-product of a close social structure, hierarchical in nature, is a natural symbol of order. Mr. Eisenhower's lack of egocentric flamboyance strengthened the desired image of simplicity, firmness, and authority. George Washington, a general and a conservative, set the mold for the soldier as President and every generation of conservatives has sought out such a man, from Harrison and Taylor to Grant and Eisenhower.

To Europeans it is the source of perpetual mystification that generals in America do not make strong executives in the Bonapartist tradition. Civilian control and the civilian code of our army set limits beyond which the most powerful general cannot go. An American military man grows up in a tradition of power within restraint. At the same time the modern army encourages the staff system and the dispersion of power through the large scale delegation of authority.

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Most important of all, the professional soldier learns in a money-starved, peacetime army to pay deep obeisance to Congress, the source of appropriations. Thus it is that our military system provides natural Presidential material for the conservative politician: a President who presides more often than he rules and who gives the impression of strength while conforming to the mode of Calvin Coolidge that "that government is best which governs least."

Religion forms yet another essential component of the mythology of the Right. Conservatives since the days of Fisher Ames and the Federalists have linked the defense of religion with the triumph of right-wing politics. We have recently witnessed a spate of books such as William Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* which associate religion with the defense of conservative economics to the confusion of both. It is surely significant that conservatives always see themselves as defenders of "spiritual values." The phrase "under God" has been added to the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and breakfast prayer meetings, an opening prayer at staff and cabinet meetings, and other manifestations of religious regularity have appeared in Washington in the last two years. These things to a large extent undoubtedly reflect a craving for order in a world changing too fast for everyone, and particularly for those people whose economic and social circumstances are such that they wish it did not change at all. A craving for stability is something quite different from a hunger to know God and do His will, but it cannot be denied that the outward symbols of religion give a reassuring aura to the sometimes grubby and always vexing task of governing a nation.

SINCE a mythology flows from sentiment and aspiration more than fact and from buried interests of the past more than approximations of present need, it is inevitably self-contradictory. The conflicts within the conservative mythology are nowhere more apparent than in foreign policy. In this area, distance gives scope to ignorance and the feebleness of counter-pressures gives freedom to the expression of many divergent tendencies.

The Eisenhower Administration has the desire to stand firm against the Russians and the desire to save money on military defense and foreign aid. Several myths are at hand to reconcile this conflict.

First of all, present difficulties may be projected to scapegoats such as Dean Acheson or traitors such as Alger Hiss or past disasters such as the loss of China. Vice President Nixon and Attorney General Brownell have had recourse to this solution during recent months.

Secondly, there is the faith in the mystique of management which accounts for the appointment of an automotive engineer as Secretary of Defense. The conservative believes that good management is not a useful tool but an end in itself. As with the victory a generation ago of Mr. Hoover, "the Great Engineer," the selection of Mr. Wilson ratifies the conservative's belief that politics is not the making of hard choices but the attainment of such efficiency as transcends the necessity of choice. If we are to be militarily strong and yet not "spend ourselves into bankruptcy," obviously the answer is good management which will give us more defense for less money, "more bang for a buck."

Thirdly, since we are to hold together a great alliance and yet not bolster it with costly foreign aid, are to contain the Russian-Chinese coalition and yet not enforce collective security by small wars which "nibble us to death," the conservative relies upon shrewd bargaining and moral suasion. It is therefore fitting that the Secretary of State should have been in private life both a successful corporation lawyer and a leader in religious lay circles. Mr. Dulles' threats to our allies of "an agonizing reappraisal" and to our enemies of "instant massive retaliation" failed to save either the European Defense Community or Indochina, but they are solidly within the conservative tradition of foreign policy. The Open Door, the Washington disarmament treaty of 1921, the Kellogg Pact, and the nonrecognition doctrine were likewise moral gestures unbacked by force. They did not succeed, but they did not cost anything either.

This foreign policy by faith rather than works becomes on a vulgar level a belief in the efficiency of merchandising. This final element in the conservative mythology is disguised as "psychological warfare," but it is at bottom a belief that the same kind of advertising that sells refrigerators and detergents at home can arouse men abroad to die for freedom even when they live under the most brutal and hostile circumstances.

The conservative mythology in foreign affairs breeds tensions within itself but these are sterile tensions and precipitate no disasters. Beneath these myths is a saving sense of caution. A conservative party with its instinct for stability withdraws from the consequences of any extreme and always vacillates back toward the center of the safe, the known, the familiar. This is especially true when as now it moves under the aegis of a President driven to deny his military past and to assert an essentially civilian outlook.

The myth of treason, the myth of managerial efficiency, the myth of financial stability, the myth of the moral gesture, the myth of psychological warfare, all these are manifestations not of a conservative foreign policy but of a search for a policy. Such a policy is not likely to be found, for we are not soon again to know that stability which is the dream at the heart of the conservative faith.

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FROM THAILAND

The Game Of Revolution

DAN KURZMAN

ONE sunny day in June 1951, a smartly dressed Siamese army officer stepped out of a black limousine on the bank of the Chowphya Menam River in Bangkok and jauntily strode up the gangplank of the American dredge *Manhattan*. On deck, a squad of Thai marines stood at attention as he clambered aboard to be greeted by representatives of Siam's diplomatic society, headed by the American Ambassador. The visitor, Field Marshal Luang Phibun Songgram, Premier of Thailand, was to accept this ship, a gift from the United States, on behalf of his government.

Suddenly, just as the ceremony got underway, the marines, at a signal, drew their revolvers and surrounded the Premier. A few Americans started to intervene, but he waved them off melodramatically: "No, please don't; perhaps it is better this way." He was then taken prisoner aboard a nearby navy vessel. But before the day was out, dive-bombers of the air force, siding with the Premier and the army against the navy, miraculously hit the vessel (at the risk of Phibun's life), which caught fire and began to sink. In the confusion, Phibun swam to shore and hid for several shivering hours until rescued. The following day he was back in power again.

This may sound like a scene from a comic opera, but Thais saw nothing extraordinary in it. Theatrical coups and counter-coups such as this have been periodic events in this politically immature country. The next coup, however—if there is one—may not be so easy to counter. For it might be led by the Communists, who have a knack for keeping power once they get it.

INDEED, Thailand, which shares its long eastern border with the Indochinese states of Laos and Cambodia, may well succeed Indochina as the leading trouble-spot in Southeast Asia. The United States, fully aware of this possibility, is losing no time training, equipping and reorganizing the nation's sixty-five-thousand-man army, which is being increased to one hundred thousand. Thailand, for its part, is closely cooperating with America in all matters of defense. One of the first countries to send troops to Korea, it was also among the first to support the proposal for a Southeast Asian defense pact.

But even with so realistic a policy, the dependability of this nation must be judged with caution. One reason lies in the irresponsibility of many of its leaders. Governing to them has always been simply a matter of perpetuating oneself in power as long as possible without, if it can be avoided, doing bodily harm to one's foes, who, after all, might someday be in a position to reciprocate. This unique political game has been popular with Siam's exclusive power-loving set since the birth of the present constitutional monarchy in 1932.

On that occasion, a joint movement of about one hundred idealistic, European-educated students and ambitious young graduates of France's St. Cyr Military Academy overthrew the absolute monarchy of King Prajadhipok without firing a shot. On the surface, the coup seemed to be a victory for democracy. But though its promoters called their movement the People's party, the people, illiterate and uninterested in politics after centuries of absolute government, took no part in the "revolution." Indeed, it is estimated that fewer than one-fourth even knew that a political change had taken place.

Since this first coup, the political history of Thailand has revolved largely around two figures: Pridi Phonomyong, who was the civilian "brain" behind the initial conspiracy, and present Premier Phibun, who was one of its military leaders.

Pridi, who worked closely with the Allies during the war as head of the underground Free Thai movement and was Premier for a time after the war, was long considered by his many occidental friends as a pro-West socialist-minded idealist. One of them even offered him the use of his motor launch to make good his escape from Thailand in 1947 after Phibun tried to have him arrested. Disillusionment was great, therefore, when Pridi turned up in Communist China early this year and urged his countrymen to resist "American imperialism."

Phibun, on the other hand, openly collaborated with the Japanese during the war (though he cooperated with the Free Thais after he realized the Allies might win), and until recently was not trusted by Western officials.

The Premier and the army are in full control of the nation today. The present Monarch, young song-writing King Bhumiphon, who ascended the throne in 1946 after his brother, King Ananda, was mysteriously shot in bed, wields no power at all, though he is popular among his people. Political parties exist, but the military is the only real power. The army's sole important opposition comes once in a while, as the kidnapping incident on the American dredge illustrated, from one of the other services—the navy, air force

Mr. Kurzman recently returned from an extended period in Asia and the Middle East, where he was a correspondent for NBC.

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or police. As in 1932, all coups or attempted coups take place without reference to the people. Yet, as one Thai observer in Bangkok earnestly pointed out to me with curious Siamese logic, "This represents a kind of democracy. The great majority of us are satisfied with such a system." And it is true that most Thais don't seem to care who their rulers are as long as they are left to live without interference.

This popular political apathy is one of the nation's greatest weaknesses. For the government in power need never worry about mass uprisings, no matter how corrupt it gets or how much of the national wealth it squanders. The fact that the people are grossly exploited by a tax system which collects the greater part of their rice profits doesn't seem to bother them. Nor does it irk them that their leaders have become directors of Thailand's biggest corporations, whose fortunes rise and fall in relation to political fortunes. Bad government? Not at all, one Thai official told me. How could good men be induced to seek high office in government without the bait of ample financial compensation?

ACTUALLY, Premier Phibun has been trying to help his people in a number of ways. Despite the fact that popular education might in the end keep "good men" out of the government, he has instituted a schooling program that may within a few years drastically reduce the nation's high illiteracy rate. And improvement is also being registered in the fields of health and agricultural development. Moreover, Phibun is encouraging the emancipation of women, though there is no longer in effect a wartime decree that ordered husbands to kiss their wives goodbye before leaving for the office as a means of raising the status of the ladies in their men's eyes.

But it is difficult to see how real progress can be made in modernizing Thailand's primitive society until the vast, openly condoned corruption in the government is eliminated. And as long as the people themselves are little concerned about this progress, the present leaders are not likely to make any important personal financial sacrifices.

The public's political indifference does more than foster corruption; it also helps the Communists. The Communists, in one respect, can make little headway; their propaganda runs up against the same wall of apathy as all other political matters. And in any case, there is little grist for their propaganda mill. Hunger is non-existent in this rice-rich nation; and there is no history of colonialism to inspire hostility toward Westerners, who, indeed, are greeted with the warmest hospitality. Even the nationalistic appeal for a Communist-controlled Greater Thai Federation, which would embrace the Thai-populated areas of Burma, Cambodia and Laos, has failed to move the masses.

But if the people are cool to Communism, they also tend to regard lightly its danger—in contrast to their leaders, who are vitally concerned about their personal power. And many who do appreciate the threat are not easily stirred to defensive action. The Thais didn't like their Japanese masters during the war; but it should be remembered that most Siamese accepted their rule with docility.

Invading Communist armies could probably bring Thailand to its knees with little trouble, unless Western forces intervened. But overt aggression might not be necessary to turn the trick. A Red victory could come through standard Thai revolutionary operating procedure—the coup d'etat. The Thai Communist party, though small, is well-organized. It consists mostly of members of the Chinese community, which represents about one-sixth of the nation's eighteen million people and controls most of its commerce.

The nationalistic Phibun has always resented the industriousness of this business-minded group, which contrasts sharply with the easy-going, leisure-loving nature of the Thais. He has denied them citizenship and has in other ways indicated his animosity toward them. Indeed, one of the reasons for Siam's all-out cooperation with the West in the struggle against Communism lies in the fact that Phibun considers the menaces of Communism and of China identical. Many Chinese, therefore, while professing loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek, have been easy targets for Mao Tse-tung's propagandists.

The Chinese danger is particularly acute in underpoliced south Thailand near the Malayan border, where Malayan Communists—almost all of them Chinese—have taken refuge after being chased across the frontier by British troops. These Malayans are believed to have won over many Thai Chinese to their cause.

The Thai Communist party has other direct foreign support, too. It is, in fact, virtually under the orders of Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Communist Viet Minh government in north Viet Nam. Thailand is saturated

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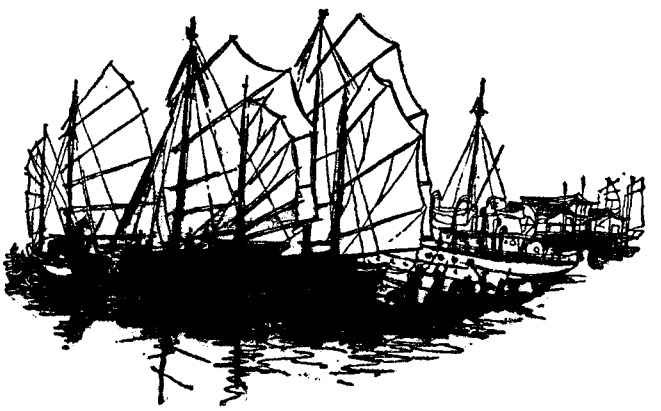
with Ho's agents, many of whom entered with the more than thirty thousand Indochinese refugees now residing in the country. On a number of occasions, they have plotted with the local Communists to overthrow the government.

THE ease with which Indochinese agents come and go across the Siamese border is one of the most dangerous aspects of Thailand's security situation. Typical of the Red-infested frontier villages is the bustling little dirt-street hamlet of Ubon, which bounds on Cambodia. While passing through this friendly one-donkey town, which almost never sees Americans (though brightly-colored American-style soda-pop signs featuring thirsty, Bikini-clad oriental damsels hang from store fronts), I met one of these agents in a coffee shop. Speaking in broken French, he readily admitted he hoped Ho would one day become the "protector" of Thailand.



Phya, as this smiling stranger with big cauliflower ears called himself, explained that he was a Cambodian of Thai racial origin. He didn't hate Westerners, as do most Vietnamese Reds. Indeed, he even treated me to a board-seat loge at the local theater where colorfully garbed Siamese players entertained a constantly applauding audience.

Where did he live? On the Cambodian side of the border. But he was at home on either side, he said, as both sides are Thai-populated. "Soon we have one big Thai state," he added confidently. And after the show, he calmly made his way across the frontier, as do hundreds of other regularly shuttling Red Indochinese agents.

From all this, it is clear that Thailand's defense position leaves much to be desired. Its deeply-rooted security deficiencies can perhaps be offset to some extent by increased American economic and military aid. But it is likely that if this country remains free, it will be due less to effective Thai resistance than to the Communist fear that new aggression might set off a wider regional, and possibly a world, war.

THE STAGE

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

HERE is Mr. G. Wilson Knight in *Principles of Shakespearian Productions*:

> You see, there is so much meaning in Shakespeare's text that if you load the eye with a new type of independent visual significance, even though it have a parallel correspondence to the play's quality, the mind cannot take it all in. . . . I once saw the moonlight and music scene of "The Merchant of Venice" beautifully arranged with cardboard marbled fountains and silhouette trees and a delicate play of moonlight on Lorenzo and Jessica. It was exquisite; I was visually intoxicated. But I did not listen to the actors. Why, in any case, attempt to spoil these exquisite sonatas of colored light with Shakespeare's heavy and laborious language? Let us have separate shows.

Precisely. Yet in their mounting of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Mr. Sol Hurok, his director Mr. Michael Benthall, and the Old Vic Company have triply invaded the attention with their lavish solicitations. In the pit, Mr. Hugo Rignold beautifully paces an orchestral reading on the decoratively embellished Mendelssohn score. For the background, Robin and Christopher Ironside have designed a series of grand tableaux—ruined classical temples, a kind of botanical Grand Canyon—which in their intimidating particularity yield nothing to the legendary realistic excesses of Sir Henry Irving. Poised between these visual and aural seductions, Miss Moira Shearer and Mr. Robert Helpmann attempt an abortive ballet to music which visibly resists their irresistible graces. But who speaks for Shakespeare and his morning-fresh masterpiece: a poor thing perhaps (it is wrongly argued) but his own, and only an occasional echo of which drifts sadly into this vast, imperfect, sumptuous auditorium?

It would be simple to achieve an easy cynicism at the expense of this so well-intentioned, so remorselessly misguided production, yet no one sensitive to quality or aspiration can but regret its failure. Everywhere it shows the energy of the impresario (though energy, it is true, deflected by very considerable lapses of taste), and if what the event finally discloses is a blend of the vices of three arts with few of their several virtues, we must nonetheless honor the impulse and the attendant richness of imaginative intention from which it has sprung.

Let criticism begin, then, with the Mendelssohn score. It is erroneous to think of this as a musical commentary on the play; rather, it is a *restatement* of the piece with its own unimpeachable terms and its proper sphere of glory (the concert hall). Mr.

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Rignold, correctly, will not permit the music to be abused, but in any such enterprise, one component suffers, and here it is the play—its lyrical speed and lightness impeded, its dramatic precedence denied. Neither, ostensibly, has anyone questioned the susceptibility of Mendelssohn's score to the particular conventions of ballet. Occasionally, the music flexibly adjusts to the new manipulations, but more often it does not: for these recalcitrant portions, Mr. Helpmann has choreographed a dance movement which my companion of the evening acutely characterized as "stalking." Mr. Helpmann and his votaries stalk and flourish with impressive aplomb, but nothing can disguise the aimlessly insipid dance structure of this work, its stately pavane of cliché.

Of the visual production, one deplores not the opulent detail (though I cannot see how, after so much pictorial assertion, Shakespeare will seem more than a magnificent irrelevance) but the strangely pedestrian and "official" air of that detail. The brothers Ironside have dressed and decorated the play with the massive ceremonial dignity of a Royal Academy landscape with figures. Garlands of ivy crown the witless heads of its heroes; an Hellenic grotto (in tasteful desuetude) shelters their trysts. A desolate crag out of *Vathek* or *The Castle of Otranto* writes a large signature of romantic sensibility across the pastoral scene. Yet what constantly eludes us is the suggestion of moist, bosky earth, of dew and the lustrous moon "decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass." We look in vain for that world of which Mr. Mark Van Doren has written, a world where "the little Western flower which Puck is sent to fetch is rich with juice, and luscious woodbine canopies the bank of wild thyme where Titania sleeps—not on but 'in' musk-roses and eglantine." The effect, so difficult of achievement, is yet not impossible: I have seen it beautifully bodied forth in a decor by Jean-Denis Malclès for the Paris Opera's production of Weber's *Oberon*.

But these are the flaws of taste. What is one to make, beyond them, of a dramatic reading so wanting in sensibility or power, of roles so brutally guyed for the coarsest laughter? Mr. Benthall's productions have never been of an order to inspire confidence (he assisted Miss Hepburn in misunderstanding "The Millionairess," and directed the Oliviers in their disappointing "Antony") yet truly I have never imagined the possibility of a Shakespearian performance in which I could legitimately find little more to admire than Miss Shearer's beautiful carriage of her body, and Mr. Stanley Holloway's manipulation (as Bottom) of the donkey's head—a charming conceit, down to its gross eyelids modestly lowered in embarrassment.

One begins this dream in wonder, and ends in a kind of dismay—dismay that a vein which has nourished the sterling triumphs of the Old Vic should run to seed at last in so lamentable an event. For that it *is* lamentable, I do not doubt—however solidly booked the engagements, however entrenched the *réclame* of its glittering ensemble. Nor do I doubt, recalling the discomfort of Henry James on a similar occasion, that "there is something monstrous in seeing the most precious intellectual heritage of the human race so fearfully knocked about." (*At the Metropolitan Opera House through October 17th.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

WHIM WITH A WHAM

ANYONE who is a devotee of *both* opera and puppets should be happy when he sees "Hansel and Gretel," the handsome Michael Myerberg production that uses the Humperdinck score and Kinemins instead of actors. Kinemins are realistic dolls, about one-third life size, that have very complicated mechanisms and can be moved by electricity on a magnetized stage without the aid of strings. Except for a most unusual film I can never quite understand why movies bother with puppets when real live people are available and sometimes better actors.

The dolls in this "Hansel and Gretel," especially those portraying the title characters, are as cute as the deuce and move around with remarkable agility; you won't, however, mistake them for real people any more than you do some of the regular movie stars who move through Hollywood musicals. Constance Bingham sings and speaks both Hansel and Gretel; Mildred Dunnock handles the mother's voice, and Frank Rogier is the father. The Apollo Boys' Choir is particularly effective in the haunting "Children's Prayer."

My favorite character is the witch, called Rosina Rubylips and spoken, sung and cackled by Anna Russell who tosses off some of the lines as if she were a disciple of Beatrice Lillie. Although this witch is pretty frightening at times, Director John Paul, Padraic Colum who adapted the play for the screen, and orchestral director Franz Allers were careful to keep a light, fairy-tale quality to the film as a whole. The sets, some of which are drawn in old-Disney manner, are not always as imaginative as they should be in spite of the good Technicolor, but this won't bother the kids who are likely to be the most appreciative audiences at this "Hansel and Gretel."

ADULTS who can really take fantasy in their stride might find "Brigadoon" more to their liking.

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This is the movie version of the delightful musical play with script by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Loewe, who did the original. While the film is never quite as light-heartedly fanciful as the theatrical production, it tells an appealing story. Two American hunters lost in Scotland stumble on a village that comes to life for only one day in every hundred years. One of these men falls in love with an eighteenth-century Scots lass and after he gets back to New York, where his fiancée and the yakity-yak of cafe society and modern living bore him, he realizes he's left his heart in the highlands to which he must return.

That this movie doesn't have a springier touch is mainly the fault of Director Vincent Minnelli who certainly knows how to handle a musical but must have had no heart for the highlands in this case. "Brigadoon" rises to the occasion in some of its production numbers: "I'll Go Home with Bonnie Jean," in which the male villagers welcome Gene Kelly and Van Johnson; "Waitin' for My Dearie," in which Cyd Charisse tells the girls why she's never married; "It's Almost like Being in Love," in which Gene dances all over the place after he's gathered heather with Cyd. Miss Charisse sparkles in looks, voice and dance as the girl Gene falls for, but Gene himself lacks some of his old lyrical bounce. And Van Johnson is kept so busy making like a cynic that he too hardly has a chance to get into the spirit of all these strange eighteenth-century goings-on transplanted into 1954.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"CORE OF THE CURRICULUM"

Patchogue, N.Y.

TO the Editors: From time to time, there has been discussion in The Commonweal concerning the college curriculum. I felt that the plans discussed (such as Mr. Dawson's and that of Manhattan College) were moving in the right direction. However, I had an uncertain feeling about Mr. Dawson's "Christian culture": what exactly was his idea of the importance of "Christian culture," and was that idea the correct one?

Now Father William Cunningham, C.S.C., has continued the discussion [Sept. 24], and there was a remark in his article which renewed my doubts. Father Cunningham said: "In Dawson's mind this is our opportunity to challenge the 'cultural relativism' of Toynbee and Northrop and emphasize the superiority of Christian culture in the history of the Western world, and its promise for the future."

What troubles me is fear of confusion between culture and religion. This "cultural relativism" suggests to me a parallel to "religious relativism." The latter would be rejected by me and by all Catholics. I am not so sure that the former need or should be rejected.

I look on religion as (in its creed and code) divinely established, and independent of time and place. I look on culture as the contradictory of this: as something that is, and that *should* be dependent on time and place. Thus in a very real sense, culture *is* relative and should be so.

This view of religion and culture, I take to be that found in, for example, the writings of Cardinal Suhard, and in Donald Attwater's *The Christian Churches of the East*. I take it to be the base of the work of the early Jesuit missionaries in China, in attempting to disassociate Christianity from "Christian culture," in the sense of "Christian culture as found in today's Christendom." The Commonweal's reviewer of Toynbee's *The World and the West* complimented Toynbee for an understanding of those Jesuits' work. This surely is not an instance of "the 'cultural relativism' of Toynbee and Northrop"?

Doubtlessly, Mr. Dawson and Father Cunningham agree with this view of mine. They may mean something quite different from what I feared they might mean. The true meaning could have been made clearer; the difference between religion and culture could have been more sharply drawn. Surely, we do not wish to go back to "the Faith is Europe. . . ."?

I am unable to see what is undesirable about Toynbee's and Northrop's theories of culture, so as to need to be challenged. I should agree that they sometimes seem to show *religious* relativism, and this should be challenged. But their cultural relativism deserves approval. They have compared cultures, refusing to consider any one as superior in all respects. Northrop, in particular, has tried to harmonize them. This kind of cultural relativism is badly needed by some in the West today.

EDWARD J. TULLY, JR.

"JOHN DEWEY: THEORY AND PRACTICE"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: While Francis Griffith's article, "John Dewey: Theory and Practice" [Sept. 24], was a refreshing analysis of the man generally credited with remaking American education, may I register one small objection? I refer to the statement, "From the classroom teacher's standpoint Dewey's most important educational contribution is his stress on the importance of self-activity, a principle adumbrated in Saint Thomas' *De Magistro*." Certainly, Dewey must be credited with recalling the attention of educators to the learner, but it cannot be claimed that Saint Thomas "vaguely foreshadowed" Dewey's concept of learning by doing.

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In *De Magistro,* Aquinas speaks of education as an active process in answering two questions. The simpler, "Whether to teach is a function of the active or contemplative life," he resolves by pointing out that while the truths which are taught are proper matter for contemplation, the task of teaching others is properly part of the active life, the end of which is directed to the utility of the neighbor.

The second question is more apropos, "Whether man can teach another and be called a teacher, or God alone?" Aquinas states his belief that knowledge pre-exists in the learner, not in purely passive potentiality, but in active potentiality. He then proceeds to compare the teacher to the doctor who ministers to nature which actually does the principal work of healing. Man can be cured by nature alone or through nature aided by medicine. Similarly, knowledge can come through natural reason of itself by "discovery" or extrinsically aided by "instruction." Actually the teacher leads the learner to the unknown in the same way as he would lead himself by the discursive process. But the learner must actively cooperate. The teacher proposes the symbols of intelligible things from which the intellect of the learner must make the necessary abstractions.

Throughout the whole treatment of learning activity, the impression is clear that Saint Thomas is speaking of intellectual activity, the work of the learner's mind or soul. This is far from an adumbration of Dewey's "learn by doing."

Saint Thomas only hints at methodology in *De Magistro.* He insists that the teacher be a master of the knowledge he would impart and that he lead the learner through the active work of pursuing truth. The problem-solving and disputations of the medieval university give a clue to the intense intellectual activity that must have been the very soul of Aquinas' own classes.

For the modern, we agree with Mr. Griffith that experimentation, discussion, dramatization and investigations are excellent means of producing pupil participation, but let us remember that all these are *means* to motivate intense intellectual activity. Without intellectual effort there will be no true learning but only the soulless classroom folderol that has been associated, sometimes unjustly, with the name of John Dewey. Let us be certain that such does not become associated with the name of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

(*Brother*) ADELBERT JAMES, F.S.C.,
Manhattan College.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

The Dual Heritage of Julien Green

MRS. GEORGE NORMAN

AS a young man of twenty-seven who had then published but two novels, the American-born French writer Julien Green was credited, by French critics, with genius. French criticism, searching as it is, has never revoked the verdict.

Recently he granted an interview to the widely-read weekly, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* of Paris. M. Gabriel d'Aubarède, the interviewer, with his fineness of perception and evident interest, was able to draw out the talk to considerable length. This, with Mr. Green's latest *Journals,* furnishes new angles on the thought and life, literary and otherwise, of the distinguished author. That he may justly be claimed by the remarkable Catholic literary revival of this century in France is proved, if not by a superficial review of his fiction, then certainly by the interview in question and his intimate and personal *Journals.*

Mrs. Norman is an English critic and novelist.

Both the fifth—and up to date the last—of Mr. Green's *Journals* and the answers to his interviewer embody, amongst much of general interest, the writer's "conversion." Julien Green had never abjured Catholicism, but had allowed its practice partly, he says, to lapse. No doubt what he describes as the pleasures —never ignoble ones, we may assert—of an easy life and the soul-destroying impacts of modern existence partly accounted for the lapse. The reader may not be impertinent, perhaps, in assuming that the writer's greatly developed sensitivity and seemingly almost morbidly-questioning mentality counted more in detaching him, in whatever degree, from the Faith he had embraced at a perhaps too early age.

Another disintegrating cause may have been his conviction of the mediocre *religious* quality of the Catholics of his youth. He set this conviction down in no uncertain terms when he was twenty-four in a *Pamphlet against the Catholics of France,* somewhat

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of a scandal there and abroad. It was an impassioned indictment of which he has written: "Had I gone deeper into this matter, I would have understood that it was not so much what I had against Catholics which I wanted to put into words as what I had against myself as a Catholic. . . . Since the age of fifteen, when I became a Catholic, I had gone through all the phases of lukewarmness . . . only indifference had I never experienced. Periods of daily attendance at Mass alternated with longer periods when I stopped going to church altogether, this from a keen sense of contradiction between what I believed and what I did; but, despite these fluctuations, my confidence in the Church remained what it had always been."

In the *Pamphlet* he adopted a pen-name, so averse was he then to a personal note; the intimacy with which he writes and speaks of spiritual, personal matters today must strike us as deliberate and heroic.

Loosely speaking, Julien Green belongs to the school of Mauriac and Bernanos. It is curious that, in spite of a life which he declares to have been almost unbearably happy, his temperament would seem such as to incline him to write mostly of a world of darkness and misery, a race given over to cruelty and hate. "I was so happy," he states, "that the thought that it might and must end threw me into a sort of despair." Perfect happiness over a long period is not often claimed and it is still more remarkable a claim as the writer states too: "I am, no doubt, less well-armed than others. I mean to say that most men wear a cuirass and that the events which strike them are, as it were, thrown off by that armor, while I receive everything full in the chest."

During the late war nostalgia, at least, is woven into the text of his journal. By night he dreamt of the golden, the shining years gone by and in daytime had a surprising memory of his dreams. Was it something of a dream, the reader may wonder, that the pursuit of happiness in his case had been so richly rewarded, and that in recollection the past shone, as it is apt to do, with a light that never really was? I do not think so; the years shed for Julien Green too great a radiance to be a mere mirage.

MR. Green in the recent Paris interview proudly proclaimed his American origin. His father came from Georgia, his mother from Virginia. His forebears were of old English stock; his grandfather had built the fine Savannah house known in the Civil War as Sherman's Headquarters; he had lent it to the invaders to save his Southern friends from having their enemy quartered on them. His son, Julien Green's father, settled, however, in Paris as the representative of a Southern oil company.

Julien, the youngest of seven children, was born in Paris in 1900 and grew up in surroundings chiefly French. He was indeed from the first so seemingly Parisian as to annoy his mother. She with her Southern charm and her own originality could not understand why he had a French accent. Almost from the first, too, he had a passion for the town of his birth.

Paris undoubtedly has a charm hard to define. The tourist, or the pleasure-seeker, finds it in the few *Grands Boulevards* he frequents; the student, or artist, that Julien Green undoubtedly is, loves another city, that of quays tree-shaded and gray, in churches dim and beautiful with age and the indefinable atmosphere of a Presence and its silent worshippers at all hours. Julien Green himself writes soberly enough: "Foreigners who drive through Paris from one museum to another do not realize what they are missing; no one who has never loafed *or wasted his time* in a city can pretend to know it, and Paris, for some reason, is as difficult to fathom as any city in the world . . . within the limits of Paris exists another city . . . an indefinable quality which allows one to say without hesitation 'This is Paris.'"

He felt acutely, when in the U.S. Army in America, the threat to his family and friends left in Paris, his home in a flat overlooking the greenness of trees, his precious books themselves; "a book is a window by which one escapes." His anxiety was tempered by all that could be done by the warmth of heart and hospitality for which his homeland is so justly celebrated and that he had already experienced from his own people long before in years at the University of Virginia; one of the old family Colonial houses is a setting for some of his work. He could, in spite of the war, at times at least, enjoy the renewal of old friendships in visits to New York and other great cities, even revel in famous picture-galleries and in the cities' music and general culture.

These interests and cares may well be subject-matter for a passage in his journal: "Anyone who reads these pages would not know at all what kind of man I am, for of the debate which day and night takes place in me I say nothing." The debate may not be set down in words, but the over-riding preoccupation of the writer's fine and acute mind in the journal is obviously with spiritual matters. He is, it would seem, surprisingly surprised by the attraction he feels for the pleasantness of life. "The exterior world with its illusions, delicious or terrifying, prevents us from finding ourselves. We must seek the way which leads to our inmost selves if we want to taste the peace surpassing understanding. I know all that, but I am also, and very unfortunately, *someone for whom the exterior world exists.*" (Italics mine.)

The debate between the ideal and what Mr. Green probably considers sybaritic tendencies seems to imply a puritan element, certainly not derived from Catholi-

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cism, in a warmly human personality. His father had become a Catholic some years later than Julien, and something of the rigid Calvinism his father had abandoned may possibly have come down to his son through earlier influences. Nothing in the *Journal,* however, hints at rigidity in any form in the charming and kindly parent Julien loved. It is not that the journalist displays an annoying scrupulosity, for he has too keen a sense of absolute values for that, but his ideal Catholic is probably ideal indeed. "Why," Mr. Green, Senior, had asked on the appearance of his son's first publication, the *Pamphlet,* "why is the fellow so enraged at Catholics; how does he want them to live? Like birds in trees?" "Being a Catholic himself," Julien Green states, "I suppose he was nettled by my ferocious upbraidings."

The streak of Puritanism, if it can be so called, does not now extend to Julien Green's dealings with others, for he is largely tolerant. His reminiscences of youthful days and companions in Paris are amusing and understanding: "I was at an age when one is most impressed by a certain form of polished cynicism; at heart I revolted against it, but I admired the qualities that went with it; quickness of mind, wit, infallible good taste and an utter scorn for anything approaching sentiment."

He can laugh too, and often does, at his own past foibles; when André Gide took upon himself to proclaim the "grandeur" of Oscar Wilde, Julien writes: "I have turned over the pages of *Dorian Gray* lately in the hopes of finding good pages (*bonnes pages*) and have found only *bon mots* . . . At the age of twenty I admired the book. It was made to dazzle young boobies like myself, and all that tinsel style and sham learning widened my eyes with astonishment."

The never-ending discussions of the youth of his time he later finds "stimulating," as he did their sparkling follies: "Robert Lefort with his brilliant nonsensical talk and his superior way of referring to Proust as Marcel, and to Cocteau as Jean, impressed me more than anyone . . . because, although he was younger than I by one year, he seemed to have read, seen and experienced everything under the sun. 'Mon cher,' he once told me condescendingly, 'you and I are good for nothing. I am twenty-two, you are twenty-three, and we haven't produced anything. It's too late now. Life is over.'"

All this he sees as mere froth upon a deeper seriousness, the gay patter of young exuberance; he is more critical of modern conditions: "In reality all modern education tends to arm us against the spiritual . . . To have peace, to establish a lasting equilibrium (but what peace, what equilibrium?) we are taught to counter all the ruses of that perpetual besieger who is God."

The *Journals* have been called "a most precious contribution to the literature of introspection;" readers may consider the introspection goes too far and that the text is over full of self and feelings. A Journal, however, is not a work of fiction, and self-expression is the very interest itself of such writing; if the author is sincere, it may be, too, one of the few real contacts between the solitary beings we all are, a gesture friendly and perhaps humble, from deep to deep.

Be this as it may, Mr. Green's introspection tends to modesty; in a brief retrospect he seems to dismiss with a shrug even his literary fame as that of just "a few books." He is nonetheless a most conscientious artist and one of his more salient qualities is his clarity of thought and expression. He is a romantic writer with an almost perfectly classic style although he has been compared to Balzac; in *Adrienne Mesurat,* for instance, he does in effect recall his great predecessor. He has not Balzac's vast range, but his closeness of observation and rendering of the drabness of provincial life in small French towns, the gray emptiness of their streets and life, as judged by strangers, is not surpassed by Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* itself. This was the more amazing in a youth of twenty-six, which was Julien's age when the "minor masterpiece" *Adrienne Mesurat* appeared. Balzac had been thirty before his first great work, *La Peau de Chagrin,* saw the light.

JULIEN Green writes, like Mauriac and Bernanos, with a full sense of responsibility. If he inclines to the sinister, as he does, it is not, one feels assured, to horrify or distress; if he writes of darkness, it is because he has always been aware of light; if of sin, because he has always recognized its venom.

Green may indeed lead us out on steeps by shapes demoniac thronged, in the almost literal sense of the poet's words, for the actual presence of the devil in our lives is a preoccupation going back to the author's sixth year! Satan was supposed by the little boy to inhabit a certain dark cupboard, and it was his heroic custom to throw open the door and summon the devil to appear. At the third summons, however, this high courage not unnaturally failed and the hero would fly in terror to his mother's arms, prepared nonetheless to try again next time.

It is not mentioned in M. d'Aubarède's interview, but Julien Green even sees a possible satanic influence in an absence of taste in Catholic "commercial" objects of piety, "such as end by being as disturbing as a diabolic manifestation." The pietistic quality of books in a Catholic library made him wonder what link there could be between such feebleness and the religion of the Gospel. . . . He is nowadays worried, too, by the intellectual mediocrity, as he sees it, of his co-religionists, a worry of the author's perhaps in-

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creased, if not produced, by a temperament which tends to fear the worst.

Is it not probable, likewise, that the intellectual level he laments in the rank and file of Catholics is really that of the rank and file the world over? Julien Green is an idealist and we remember the loftiness of his ideal for his fellow-Catholics—he would like it to apply, perhaps unreasonably, to the intelligence of the least gifted.

If this aspiration leads to minor criticism of others, he is still far more critical of himself in the personal record with its tone "so profoundly true and which gives to this journal an inimitable accent," as was recently said. Crowned and acclaimed two years ago by a committee of some of the most eminent French authors who awarded him the *Prix de Monaco,* and sharing with Colette alone in France the distinction of election to the *Académie Royale* of Belgium, he still maintains his fundamental modesty. He remains, too, at heart gratefully American.

In this brief consideration of some aspects of a writer and thinker, we may conclude with some words of his own. To him, Kant's starry heavens are but the veils of truer heaven: "I lose myself in contemplation of the night skies . . . it is to find there what I have sought since I was a child, and when I watch the stars I can never be quite unhappy. It is that which in me is true."

BOOKS

Finding an Epicurean Basis for a Victorian Culture

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP: A study of E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and their Circle. By J. K. Johnstone. Noonday. $5.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

MEMBERS of an intellectual generation that has lost religious faith or never possessed it tend to become either Epicureans or Stoics: individual temperament usually decides whether they seek to purge life's pleasures of the grossness that turns later to pain, or, more conscious of pain than pleasure, strive to place their integrity beyond the reach of either. The Bloomsbury group—among whom we number, besides E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, and Virginia Woolf, the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the art critics Roger Fry and Clive Bell, the economist John Maynard Keynes, and the sociologist-historian Leonard Woolf—were earnest Epicureans to a man.

In the most illuminating of his seven chapters, "Bloomsbury Philosophy," Mr. Johnstone reveals how much the group as a whole owed to the ethical speculations of the Cambridge philosopher G. E. Moore, who was an Epicurean at heart:

> Although Moore devotes much of *Principia Ethica* to a refutation of hedonism, yet pleasure creeps into his own philosophy: he rejects hedonism, but decides that aesthetic enjoyment and the pleasures of human intercourse "include *all* the greatest, and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine."

Moore could hardly have devised a system of ethics more comforting to the artist or critic than this, which, whatever its deficiencies in other respects, grants intrinsic value to the work of art. Bloomsbury had imbibed upper-middle-class culture with their mothers' milk, but had lost or rejected many of the values on which it was based, including some that were frankly materialistic. It was a relief not to have to throw that culture away; instead, they jacked it up, tore out the old foundation, and wheeled Moore's system underneath in its place. When the jacks were taken away, the cultural edifice settled down on its new basis and looked, itself, almost better than new:

> Moore swept away many moral encumbrances, and in their place he set an Ideal that was spiritual and unwordly and yet included the appreciation of beautiful material things. It was this work of Moore's that Bloomsbury admired most. His values seemed to them more real and honest than those of the Victorians; and his ethics held the promise of a richer and fuller life than the Victorian moral code had allowed.

Mr. Johnstone goes on to show, in his chapter "Bloomsbury Aesthetics," that these aesthetics—mainly developed by Roger Fry, and applied to literature by Forster, Strachey and Virginia Woolf—were closely related to Moore's ethics. A too narrowly materialistic realism was to be avoided, but the lesser truth was to be rejected only in favor of a greater truth—"significant form." Real art "is concerned with the contemplation of formal relations." Bloomsbury never rejected life—as Epicureans, they could not—but they tried to organize its data into works of art where the beauty of the whole was greater than the sum of the parts; perhaps this has always been the aim of every artist since time began.

An opening chapter, "Bloomsbury," explains how the group gradually formed itself around Virginia and Vanessa, daughters of that great man-of-letters Sir Leslie Stephen, after their father's death. The group largely consisted of their brother Thoby's Cambridge friends; handsome Thoby died only two years after his father.

The two chapters on philosophy and aesthetics follow. After them comes a chapter on the "attitude to life" of Forster, Strachey, and

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Virginia Woolf which, perhaps because its subject matter is hard to define, proves to be the least satisfactory one in the book. Finally we have the meat of the book: three long chapters of literary criticism which analyze the novels of E. M. Forster, the biographies of Lytton Strachey, and the novels of Virginia Woolf, in that order.

Bloomsbury would have appreciated Mr. Johnstone's patient, sober, sensitive criticism, though their own was apt to be less patient and showier. He examines each work in turn as an autonomous entity, carefully bringing out the "formal relations" within it. I found very real pleasure in reviving, with Mr. Johnstone's skilled assistance, my memory of books that I have not re-read for five or ten or fifteen years. Forster, who is a surprisingly forgettable writer, I have not read since as an undergraduate I gulped him whole. Mr. Johnstone, who deliberately—and very wisely—gives a great deal of space to recapitulation of Forster's novels, implies that they are forgettable precisely because there is always so much going on in them, both above and below the surface; he may be right. At any rate it is good to be reminded of their rich texture.

By purposely treating Strachey's biographies only as works of art, Mr. Johnstone avoids what many people will consider the main issue: namely, their fairness and truth to life. Personally, I was so irritated by the incomprehension and lack of humility—not to say active bumptiousness—shown in *Eminent Victorians* that I never cared to read *Queen Victoria* or *Elizabeth and Essex*. For a biographer not to understand his subjects is bad enough; for him to mock at what he does not understand is even worse. Perhaps the fact that Strachey was a book reviewer for nearly fifteen years before he wrote a real book destroyed his capacity for humility *Mea culpa. . . .*

I have just two crows to pluck with Mr. Johnstone about his otherwise admirable study of Virginia Woolf's novels. One is that he writes about her as if she had had no novelist contemporaries but E. M. Forster. Surely *Mrs. Dalloway* would have been a very different book if *Ulysses* had not appeared some years before? My other quarrel concerns his praise of Virginia Woolf's elaborate devices to indicate the passage of time: the section "Time Passes" in *To the Lighthouse* and the "waves" themselves in *The Waves*. Better no transitions at all than such creaky ones. What could be triter than to compare the progress of human life between cradle and grave to that of a day between dawn and sunset? Yet Virginia Woolf does precisely that in *The Waves*.

All quibbling aside, Mr. Johnstone earns our respect—and our gratitude—by the insights he offers us on almost every page. And what of Bloomsbury? I have always felt that there were large areas of life which they either did not understand (Strachey) or could not handle artistically (Forster and Virginia Woolf). It is perhaps symptomatic that Strachey and Forster never married, that Mrs. Woolf never had a child. As for their work: Strachey I can live without; Forster I shall look into again when I find time; but Virginia Woolf, in spite of her limitations, makes me see with her eyes and hear with her ears. Her books always enhance the experience of being alive for me; the Epicurean in me cannot deny their fascination.

The Mind and Heart of a Hero

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: The Prairie and the War Years. By Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace. $7.50.

By JOHN COURNOS

OF inestimable service to the larger reading public is this distillation of Carl Sandburg's six-volume biography into a single, if immense, volume. It should find its way into the hands of every reader who, for one reason or another, has shied away from the monumental work. The drama of Lincoln's life and times indeed gains from this condensation; it quickens the tempo, deepens the conflict of contending forces in the greatest crisis in American history.

Moreover, it is made clear in Mr. Sandburg's acknowledgements at the end of the volume that a surprisingly long list of new books on Lincoln and the Lincoln era have been published since the original publication of the six-volume work, and he has incorporated into his revision the more important of the new data. Certainly, the list reveals the extraordinary fact that there is no abatement of interest in Lincoln, and in the growth of the Lincoln legend. In the complex personality of Lincoln the lacking element was hate, the ever-present element was love of human beings. And it is hate that vanisheth, and love that endureth.

In reading this life, the overpowering impression one receives is that of Lincoln's uniqueness. Let us not be deceived because we have become accustomed to think of Lincoln's greatness in terms of simplicity, such as has inspired the appelations of "Father Abraham" and "Honest Abe." Such a popular judgment carries its own truth, but not the whole truth. For as we read on and on, and plunge deeper and deeper into the man's heart and mind, or skim along the expansive surfaces, amplified each year by new books, records, documents and commentaries, we become increasingly impressed with the complexity of the man, a complexity carrying, paradoxically enough, the appearance of infinite simplicity. It is an appearance as deceptive as that of the pearl, if we do not stop to consider the chemical processes which went into its making.

Carl Sandburg, who has spent many long years in his labor of love, seems to lean to the view that the more you know about Lincoln the more of an enigma he appears to be. In support of this he quotes Roy P. Basler who, having read the million-word record of Lincoln's speeches and writing several times, has con-

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cluded that "the more fully Lincoln's career is traced . . . the more his genius grows and passes beyond each interpretation." It is a view which coincides with Gamaliel Bradford's terser statement: "He still smiles and remains impenetrable."

Such a series of contradictions as are evident in Lincoln's nature are without precedent. If, sometimes warring, they created conflicts in him, he was always able somehow to resolve them, if with untold pain to himself. No split personality here, none of that duality on which Dostoevsky was so fond of harping, but an integrated personality, of a wholeness rarely if ever met with among erring humans. How, through those terrible war years, in the face of almost insoluble problems, terrible criticism, bitter invective, vicious name-calling, and his own humility, he managed to sustain the precarious equilibrium of his being, is part of the Lincoln enigma. So little was he thought of even by his own side that when Edward Everett was chosen to deliver the Gettysburg oration, the invitation sent to Lincoln later came only as "an afterthought." It took a French politician of the period to assert: "You don't appreciate Mr. Lincoln at his proper value. No monarch in Europe could carry on such a colossal war in front while harassed by so many factions and fault-finders behind. . . . On every side I hear people say that Mr. Lincoln will merit more than a biography—he will merit a history."

An example of Lincoln's strange character is that he bore within himself the spirit of tragedy while so often revealing the mask of comedy. In the gravest situation he was known to joke. It provoked Richard Henry Dana to write in a letter: "Can this man Lincoln *ever* be serious?" To a Congressman who asked him how, after a terrible military reverse, he could indulge in levity, Lincoln, breaking down his own reserve, with tears streaming down his face, replied: "If I could not get momentary respite from the crushing burden I am constantly carrying, my heart would break!"

Can one after the Gettysburg address doubt that Lincoln was a master of English prose? Yet how often he was criticized for the uncouthness of his language, his critics blind to the fact that Lincoln was human enough to descend to the unlettered poor to make them, as it were, feel "at home."

Pathos on an immense scale touched his personality. Tears, humor, sentiment knew him well. He loved children, and children adored him. To them, he was not ugly, but beautiful. And to many women, too, whose soldier sons he pardoned on the slightest pretext. He has been called ungainly, graceful, ugly, beautiful, vulgar, gracious, wise and a buffoon. In his heart he knew he was on his way to Golgotha.

Is this book of Sandburg's a work of literature? It tends to be loose, rambling, diffuse. It does not matter here. Carl Sandburg was possessed by Lincoln, and in the result he has created not so much a book as a man. You forget that you are reading a book, so obsessed are you with the man he has written

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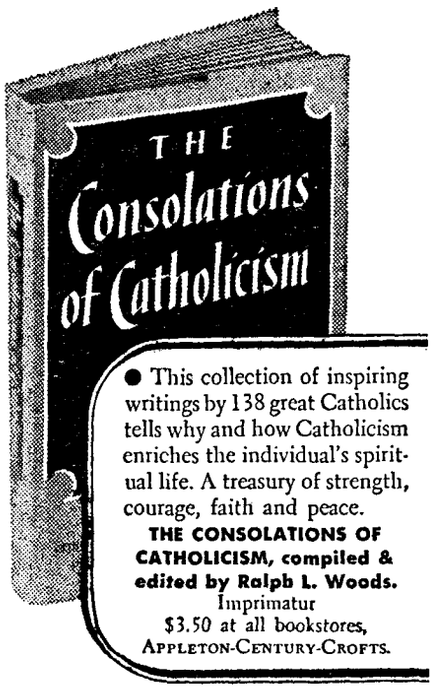

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about in this long record, from which little is omitted. The author seems to have followed Saint John's counsel: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." And from these fragments he has wrought a heroic figure which none should neglect, a figure of integrity, of wholeness.

Two Irishmen

TWO STUDIES IN INTEGRITY: Gerald Griffin and the Rev. Francis Mahony. By Ethel Mannin. Putnam. $4.

By FRANCIS SWEENEY

THE title of this double biography of two disparate spirits of nineteenth century Ireland is an uneasy makeshift—unexceptionable for Gerald Griffin but rather strained for the Reverend Francis Sylvester Mahony. To be sure there was a truculent straightforwardness and consistency about Father Prout, and Mrs. Mannin localizes his integrity in his lifelong contempt for sham.

Both 'ascendancy Irish,' which meant Anglo-Irish, they enjoyed a sheltered childhood in moderately affluent surroundings. Mahony was educated by the Jesuits in Ireland and France, Griffin by a succession of no-nonsense schoolmasters whose tradition still keeps Irish schools among the finest in the world.

From a bookish boyhood Griffin drew an ambition to make his mark in writing. A stint as editor of a moribund Limerick paper gave him courage to go to London, following that homing instinct which drew Irish writers as unerringly as the swallows are drawn to Capistrano. Success came after a period of Grub Street hardships. It was the deceptive fame of a popular playwright and versifier, a novelist who was the rage for a season in the lending libraries. It did not deceive Gerald Griffin long. A bitter-sweet friendship with a Quakeress who was already married sobered him further. He had been thinking of studying for the priesthood, but now abandoned this prospect for the life of a teaching brother. He entered the Christian

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Brothers in 1838, at the age of thirty-five. Within two years he succumbed to typhus, at the Brothers' monastery in Cork, leaving behind him golden opinions for his love of penance and prayer.

Penance and prayer were not the commanding influences in the life of Francis Mahony. As a student at Clongowes and in Amiens he was attracted to the Jesuit way of life and was admitted as a novice. It became evident that he possessed only the intellectual qualifications in any abundance, and after long and indulgent trial he was dismissed. He persisted in his desire for the priesthood and was ordained *titulo patrimonii* to a state which he never quite disgraced, but which soon became secondary as he exploited his gifts for journalism, satire and conviviality. His "beloved doggerel" about Shandon bells still appears in anthologies—for reasons not evident to this reviewer.

Mrs. Mannin's account of the two writers—undoubtedly the fullest and most accurate of both of them—does not bring the reader next or nigh either Griffin or Mahony. Only a few chapters, like the record of Mahony's outrageous feud with Daniel O'Connell and Tom Moore, sparkle with life, but they are enough to redeem what would otherwise be a dull book.

Perfectly Served

HESTER LILLY AND 12 SHORT STORIES. By Elizabeth Taylor. Viking. $3.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

MRS. Taylor writes like a great chef approaching the purest of ingredients. She brings her great technical skill to bear upon the most perishable and delicate subject—the decay of love between husband and wife, between child and parent, between the human soul and the world around it. She seems not so much to *concoct* as to *have*, ready-made and to hand, the whole heart of the matter she would have you know about, and she leaves it with you, so finely prepared, so perfectly served up, that any evidence of the way it was done has completely vanished. She has, to pursue the metaphor to a merciless end, completely straightened the kitchen even before the feast is eaten.

Love dies, Mrs. Taylor is saying. It dies, leaving behind the disintegration of loneliness in a widow ("A Sad Garden"), in a blinded and embittered old man ("Spry Old Character"), the object and frightening revulsions of an adolescent, the hysterical discontinuity of an impoverished and alcoholic gentlewoman ("Hester Lilly"). It crumbles when the pretensions of respectability are destroyed ("I Live in a World of Make Believe") and when the festering familial wounds are exposed to air ("A Red-Letter Day"). Love is, in her hands, a tissue so thin, so decadent, so much a part always of the recent past that it gives at the touch of a word and returns to its only home, the shadows of the world.

How does she convey all this delicacy within the fleeting areas of the short story, or even in the ampler stretches of the novelette? Again, I cannot really tell. Sometimes her trick is the use of a strategic bit of talk, sometimes she has an evasive way of cutting her people off in mid-emotion, leaving the reader to finish off, in delight at his own sudden creativeness, the rest of the experience. But most often she miraculously chooses the right word, the right tone, and moves her characters so inconspicuously they seem to be traveling independent of her propulsion. She is, in short, a writer to search out at once, and cherish.

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It is possible that my estimate of Mrs. Taylor's achievement is exaggeratedly high. It may be that I am still under the spell of her extraordinary perception. If so, it is a rare and wonderful state for a critic to be caught in, and I will not be easily awakened.

A Christian View

THE LIE ABOUT THE WEST. By Douglas Jerrold. Sheed & Ward. $1.75.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

WRITING in *The Review of Politics* some ten years ago, the late Waldemar Gurian harshly epitomized Arnold Toynbee's method in *A Study of History* as "the time-machine." Gurian suggested that a short and systematic presentation (not Somervell's abridgement) of Toynbee's reflections on history would be interesting and valuable, whereas *A Study of History* bound the author to arbitrary and questionable categories.

When, however, Toynbee in the Reith Broadcast Lectures expounded his general views on *The World and the West,* the product was interesting but less certain in value. Toynbee's popular and timely formulation compounded the arbitrary with ambiguity, some of which was later explained in a controversy in *The Times Literary Supplement.* In *The Lie About the West* Douglas Jerrold has written a dissenting, Christian response to Toynbee's challenge.

"Christian" is the heart of the matter, for Toynbee is not prepared to accept a unique Christian revelation and Church. He shies away from a belief in uniqueness lest he be guilty of the cultural provincialism against which he warns his readers. In characteristic fashion Toynbee has written that "Christ's unique merits cannot be appropriated by any human being or by any institution." The meaning of this begins to appear when Toynbee expresses his hope of a new world religion, probably deriving from Christianity, to be evolved in time for the reconciliation of the West, the Communist heresy of the West in the Soviet world, and Asia.

Jerrold writes as a conservative attacking a liberal humanist whose detachment has led to forgetting or misusing the very names of things. Toynbee describes the present crisis as the product of the West's long record of aggression against the world, particularly against Russia. The world is in the course of taking over the technology and nationalism of the West, but these borrowings will require a further Western transformation of the world.

As a conservative Jerrold argues that Toynbee perversely personifies cultures and simultaneously renders man impotent in the mold of his own culture. He scores tellingly when he argues against Toynbee's account of the West's aggression against Russia. The liberal intellectual, he argues, is excessively fascinated by force, and Toynbee in the Reith lectures did exaggerate the role of military men in Turkish nationalism. More surprising, and Jerrold does not develop this point, is Toynbee's description of intercultural influence largely in terms of conflict and hostility.

Jerrold's verdict that *The World and the West* is more likely to undermine than promote the defense of the West is amply justified. But his own account of the world dimensions of the crisis, especially China, imperialism and the first world war, has a more than Churchillian narrowness. On these matters Toynbee speaks from greater knowledge and a wide vision. Nevertheless, where Toynbee leans to the conciliation of surrender, Jerrold defends essentials.

REVIEWERS

Vivian Mercier teaches comparative literature at the City College of New York.

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By Gabriel A. Almond

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An Open Letter....

New York 16, N. Y.

TO Our Readers: How large is your stake in The Commonweal? To what extent do you share in the magazine's general attitude and viewpoints? The success or failure of The Commonweal's 30th Anniversary Campaign will depend on your answer to this question.

If many of our readers agreed with us on every specific issue of the day, we, above all others, would be much surprised. We expect disagreement, and it has even been said that we court it. As we pointed out last February in "What Is The Commonweal?": "This is as it should be. Anyone publishing a journal of opinion, Catholic or not, must count on the fact that the world is full of people with opinions of their own." But this magazine does depend for its existence upon people who believe in the idea of The Commonweal, who think its continued existence adds something to the American—and Catholic—scene.

How strongly do our readers believe in the idea of The Commonweal? We do not know. The weeks remaining will tell the story. If you think The Commonweal is important, we urge you to do what you can to get new subscribers for the magazine's 30th Anniversary Campaign.

We are still 4,000 new subscribers from our goal. At this stage the number required is still large. Yet reaching this goal is vitally important to the future of The Commonweal. You can help greatly to bring the campaign to a victorious conclusion by making use now of the coupon below.

Sincerely, THE EDITORS.

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